

PROCEEDINGS  
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MAMAIA AND MAMAIIDÆ.

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Parental affection will excuse and may almost demand on my part a defense of the terms *Mamaia* and *Mamaiidæ* against the rival claims of *Paramaya*, recently advocated by Miss Mary J. Rathbun in these proceedings (Vol. XVIII, p. 73, February 21, 1905). We are in substantial agreement as to the general principles that should govern zoological nomenclature, but the facts of the particular case to which those principles are applied require to be rather narrowly scrutinized. Briefly to recapitulate, the position is this: Lamarck in 1801 published a generic name *Maja* (or *Maia*), which by prompt transfer came into use for the crab known down to the present day as *Maia squinado* (Herbst). This *Maja* or *Maia* is now admitted to be untenable. In 1837 de Haan published, without description, two figures of a species called on the plate "*Pisa (Paramaya) spinigera*, n." In 1839 he published a description of "*Maja (Maja) spinigera*, n. sp.," with a reference to the plate "T. XXIV. f. 4 ♀ (*Paramaya*)," and in 1849, under "Errata in tabulis specierum," he writes "Tab. XXIV. fig. 4: *Maja (Paramaya) spinigera* n.; lege: *M. (Maja) spinig.*" It should be noticed that neither in 1839 nor in 1849 does de Haan quote the plate legend quite accurately, since on both occasions he uses *Paramaya*, a word of four syllables, instead of *Paramaya*, which by the marks of diæresis was made a word of five syllables, unless we take the y

to represent the Dutch *i j*, which would throw some doubt on the Latinity of *Paramaja*.

Miss Rathbun argues that it was not within de Haan's competence, after the publication of his plate, to make the change which he recorded in his text. But here a question arises of somewhat wider interest than the immediate subject of our controversy.

In the introduction to his very valuable "Index Animalium" (p. vii, Cambridge, 1902) Mr. C. D. Sherborn lays down a rule, for which he is himself, I imagine, exclusively responsible. He says :

The figure depicted on a plate may, or may not, be the drawing intended by the author, it is the work of the artist who is also responsible for the descriptive legend. In numerous instances the descriptive legend on a plate is quite erroneous, and has been repudiated by the author in his text. Until the text descriptive of a plate appears, the names on the plate must be considered as *nomina nuda*, and it is open to any one to describe and rename such *nomina nuda*."

Obviously for my present purpose this legislation would be completely decisive, as showing that *Paramaja* had no validity up to the time when it was disowned and cancelled by its reputed author. To me, however, Mr. Sherborn's statement seems too sweeping. I can not accept his dictum that the artist is responsible for the descriptive legend on a plate, in any other sense than that which would make the printer responsible for the descriptive legend on a page of text. In each case, as we all know, the author's intention may be sadly misrepresented, but in the long run we find ourselves deeply indebted to the general accuracy both of printers and lithographers. There are cases in which a good figure will tell much more than an indifferent description, and in these there seems no reason why the satisfactory figure should not be allowed to give validity to the accompanying name of a species. But this is not the same thing as saying that any and every figure should have the privilege even in regard to specific names. Much more will the license require restriction when genera or subgenera are in question. Can we really be expected to accept de Haan's two figures of the species *spinigera* as an adequate definition of a new subgenus? How could that be adequate for the rest of the world, when it was not adequate for the author himself? *Paramaja* of the figures was

a subgenus of *Pisa*, but this subgenus was never described, simply because investigation showed that there was no such subgenus. It was not the name only that was dropped, but the thing. That which de Haan eventually described was a subgenus, not of *Pisa*, but of *Maja*. It must be considered fortunate that he did not choose to name it *Paramaya*, for, had he done so, we should have been saddled with a generic name and several others consequent upon it all signifying a relationship to *Maja*, when carcinology no longer possessed a *Maja* to which they could be either nearly or distantly related. Under these circumstances I trust that *Mamaia* and *Mamaiidæ* will be allowed to stand.